



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

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Eastern Tier Consortium Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Consortium President, Dennis Palmer, Richland County Sheriff's Office, presided over the meeting of the Eastern Tier Interoperability Consortium (ETIC) in Glendive on Wed., Feb. 25. Chief Michaels brought the group up to date on the most recent IM Finance, Governance and Project Directors meetings.

Butch Renders, Richland County DES Coordinator, gave the IM Technical Committee report and provided information on the site selection for the second master controller. Doug Buxbaum, Dawson County Commissioner, and ETIC members discussed the site name and decided on the "Belle Prairie site," based on the name of the surrounding quadrant of land. Pam Tierney-Crisafulli, Dawson County DES Coordinator, reported on the FEMA Assistance to Fire Fighters grant that the consortium is working on. She is still waiting for data from a few counties, but is making strong progress.

Butch also reviewed plans for the East Central Ring, and Wing Spooner, Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB), provided information about an appropriations request to fund the second half of Phase 1 of the Southeastern Communications Loop. Path studies will be needed on sites involved. Sherry Evans, Northrop Grumman, provided information on the Mobile Data needs Assessment, and distributed questionnaires.

The next meeting of the ETIC will be on Wed., March 25 beginning at 10:00 am at the Community Room of the Dawson County Courthouse, 207 West Bell, in Glendive.

Miles City Fire Dept. Receives AFG Grant

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Miles City Fire Department received notice in late February that it had received a \$140,200 FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) to purchase upgraded radio communications equipment. According to Fire Chief Derrick Rodgers, "This grant came at an opportune time because we definitely had to upgrade our equipment, and the city didn't have the finances to do it. Our base station was manufactured in 1976, so it's great to be able to update our department's equipment and move into the digital age."

The City of Miles City and Custer County have been actively working to comply with the Statewide

Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP), and are part of the Eastern Tier Interoperability Consortium (ETIC). In 2007, a needs assessment was conducted to determine communications equipment needs of each public service department and the appropriate number and locations for repeater sites as well as necessary equipment for those sites.

"Having an up-to-date assessment took the guesswork out of knowing what equipment to apply for," said Rodgers. "We were able to clearly outline necessary equipment options, ensuring that we ordered the right equipment that had the capabilities needed for desired applications. We also wanted to make sure that all equipment was compatible with the IM system."

According to Rodgers, it is essential that firefighters have the necessary tools to communicate seamlessly, in remote terrain, and over long distances. "As more people, houses and businesses are located in areas at risk from wildfire, the probability is increasing that our community will pay a tremendous economic, social, and ecological price when fires occur," he said.

"New equipment was an absolute necessity, and the grant was a godsend," Rodgers said.

NTIP Fleet Mapping Training Announced

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

A fleet mapping work session is being offered March 17-19 at the Hill County Detention Center, 1450 2nd St. W., in Havre. Thirty training slots are available. Anyone who is interested in attending should notify Curt Petrik as soon as possible (but no later than March 12) because openings will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis, with Northern Tier members given preference. Curt may be reached at (406) 765-2970 or via Email at: cpetrik@co.sheridan.mt.us. A waiting list also will be maintained.

The work session will begin at 1:00 on Tuesday, go all day on Wednesday, and finish by noon on Thursday. Hill County Sheriff Don Brostrom, Flathead County Radio System Administrator Jack Spillman, and Lewis & Clark County Radio System Administrator Roger Hays are the instructors. Prior to the session, participants should fill out the Fleet Mapping Checklist located at: http://interop.mt.gov/content/docs/fleet_mapping/Fleetmapping_Checklist.doc. Having specific information about the frequencies that will be loaded in



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radios as well as radio model and serial numbers will be extremely helpful.

Participants will be able to analyze this information, begin the process of creating a fleet map, and determine how code plugs should be derived. Instructors will provide personalized assistance. Everyone also is encouraged to either bring a laptop computer or a storage thumb drive to load and store useful information, spreadsheets, and forms.

Any with questions should contact either Curt at the number above or Don Brostrom at (406) 265-2512 ext. 107 or via Email at brostrom@hillso.ci.havre.mt.us.

Northern Tier Consortium Meeting

By Dan Sullivan dsullivan@mt.gov

The Northern Tier Consortium (NTIC) met in Havre on Thurs., March 5. Mark Adams, Northrop Grumman, gave a status report on the Northern Tier microwave implementation and indicated that the system can “see” all the way to Scobey. Aside from some connectivity issues with Culbertson, the rest of the Northern Tier microwave is running without errors. Two items delaying final completion of the Northern Tier system are fleet mapping and Motorola’s Coverage Acceptance Test Planning (CATP).

Committee members made plans to hold a fleet mapping training session in Havre March 17-19 (see related article.) Sheriff Don Brostrom noted that fleet mapping is complete for Hill County. Mark Adams mentioned that consolettes at local Motorola shops along the Northern Tier will be discussed at the fleet mapping work session.

Suggestions were made to move up the Motorola CATP testing schedule. Although subject to change—especially due to weather and road conditions—Mark reported the schedule to be as follows: CATP 1 will be complete by May 1; CATP 2 will be complete by June 1; and, CATP 3 will be complete by August 26. The “cut-over” to the new system will be September 17 with final acceptance on October 22.

Scott Bradford, Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB), said he is sending out letters to check radio serial numbers and transfer ownership of radios purchased with COPS grant monies to local jurisdictions; however, ownership will not transfer to those few jurisdictions that have not paid the local

12.5% match. Scott plans to notify jurisdictions of an end-of-the-month deadline for submitting the local match. Some 400 radio installations are budgeted with COPS grant funds as well. It was noted that the IM has a list of unfunded radio needs that totals more than \$1 million. If jurisdictions have not reported their radio needs to the IM, they should do so.

After the meeting was adjourned, Mark Adams gave a briefing on the Mobile Data Needs Assessment. The next Northern Tier meeting will be on Thurs., April 2, at 9:00 am at the Great Northern Inn, 1345 1st Street, in Havre.

Upcoming Meetings

March 9

IM Finance Committee

Helena • 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd.

March 9

IM Governance Committee

Helena • Noon - 5:00 pm

Dept. of Corrections Annex, Behind 515 N. Sanders St.

March 10

IM Project Directors (IMPD) Meeting

Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

MACo Large Conference Rm., Lower Level
2715 Skyway Drive

March 11

Central Montana Consortium (CMICC)

Lewistown • 10:00 am

Central Montana 9-1-1 Center • 305 W. Watson St.

March 11

South Central Montana Consortium (SCMICC)

Big Timber • 10:00 am

Carnegie Library, 314 McLeod Street

March 16-19

Western Consortium (WICC)

Polson • Time to be announced

KwaTaqNuk Best Western Resort, US Highway 93

March 25

Tri-County Consortium

Helena • 10:00 am

Dept. of Corrections Annex, behind 515 N. Sanders

March 25

Eastern Tier (ETIC)

Glendive • 10:00 am

Dawson County Courthouse Community Rm., 207 W. Bell

March 26

Big Sky 11 Consortium

Billings • Technical Committee: 8:30 -10:00 am

• Consortium: 10:00 am – noon

Billings Fire Station #1/EOC - 2300 9th Ave N.